

Workers' Compensation Work Experience Program Procedures

Work Experience Program Procedures

The Work Experience Program is a tool to provide training, evaluation, development, and/or the facilitation of gainful employment. Although these assignments are designed to increase re-employment opportunities within the State of Michigan, they will not guarantee a job offer to the participant. **Participants should consider a Work Experience assignment to be time limited** – *a phase in the rehabilitation process which works toward defined return-to-work objectives. A Work Experience Agreement is to be used in conjunction with an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP).*

Work Experience identification:

The following procedures for the Work Experience program are provided to ensure that the return-to-work experience is successful for all parties concerned.

Before starting a Work Experience for a Workers' Comp claimant, the Voc Rehab Provider will need to have approval from the Case Manager from the Department of origin and the Department where they will be doing the work experience.

The Department Case Manager, from the work experience location, will give the Voc Rehab Provider the name of the department contact or Supervisor for the Work Experience.

Contact will then be made by the Voc Rehab Provider with the proposed on-site supervisor to ensure that the Work Experience falls within the medical restrictions of the return-to-work candidate. Once it is determined that the Work Experience meets the restrictions, a meeting between the on-site supervisor, the return-to-work candidate and the Voc Rehab Provider will take place. This is a time for the Voc Rehab Provider and return-to-work candidate to meet the on-site supervisor, review work hours, and discuss the Work Experience expectations and specific objectives. Having the Voc Rehab Provider at this meeting allows them the opportunity to assess the work site for adaptability to any medical restrictions. It is expected that the Voc Rehab Provider and the supervisor will review the reporting and the reporting forms supplied by the Voc Rehab Provider.

In addition, the Voc Rehab Provider will provide the on-site supervisor with a "Work Experience Agreement" form that should be signed by the supervisor and the return-to-work candidate during the initial meeting. The Voc Rehab Provider must send a copy of this form to the respective third party administrators (Citizens Management Inc. (CMI) for Workers' Comp.), the on-site supervisor, the return-to-work candidate and the Department Case Manager.

It will be expected that the Voc Rehab Provider will maintain contact with the on-site supervisor and the Department Case Manager while monitoring the return-to-work candidate's progress during the Work Experience.

Employer of record:

Prior to commencing a Work Experience an "Employer of Record" will need to be established. The CMI claims adjuster will make a referral to the "Employer of Record" for Workers' Comp claimants. Once the referral is made to the "Employer of Record," the "Employer of Record" will provide the Voc Rehab Provider with all necessary employment forms and work with the Voc Rehab Provider to ensure that all the appropriate paperwork is completed. Once the paperwork is completed the Voc Rehab Provider will send copies, to the "Employer of Record", CMI, and the return-to-work candidate.

Voc Rehab Provider:

The Voc Rehab Provider will be responsible for meeting with the on-site supervisor and the return-to-work candidate prior to the start of the Work Experience. The purpose of the meeting is to understand the job responsibilities, assess the work site and to fill out the "Work Experience Agreement." A copy of the Work Experience agreement should be provided to CMI, the on-site supervisor and the return-to-work candidate. The Voc Rehab Provider will also be responsible for making sure that all appropriate paperwork is filled out and returned to the "Employer of Record" prior to the Work Experience start date. The Voc Rehab Provider must also have an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) outlining the purpose, goals, objectives and time frames of the Work Experience. Work Experiences are meant to go no more than 90 days, however, they may be renewed if the goals and objectives have not been met or new goals and objectives are identified. The return-to-work candidate and the Voc Rehab Provider should sign the IWRP. A copy of the IWRP will be on file with CMI.

Work Experiences may also be terminated before the 90-day period has been completed. Work Experiences are considered "at will" and any party may terminate agreements without cause at any time.

The Voc Rehab Provider is also responsible for requesting that the Supervisor complete the weekly evaluation forms. The Voc Rehab Provider will send copies of the form to CMI. The Voc Rehab Provider will review the evaluation form with the return-to-work candidate. The Voc Rehab Provider will respond to any request by the on-site supervisor for a meeting.

Return-to-Work Candidate:

The return-to-work candidate will be responsible for weekly submission of payment vouchers reflecting appropriate wages earned and hours worked to the CMI claims adjuster. This will allow adjustments to be made to the employee's benefit payment.

Mileage Guidelines:

Employees who have been separated from the State or placed on a leave of absence will be paid mileage for Work Experience travel, up to 45 miles one way. Parking will be reimbursed for these employees as long as they provide a parking receipt.

If the employee has not been separated from the State, then no mileage will be paid unless their travel to the Work Experience is a longer commute than their original travel to work. In this case, the employee would receive the difference in mileage traveled. Parking will be reimbursed for these employees as long as they provide a parking receipt.

Steps to follow to establish the Work Experience:

1. It is decided that a Work Experience would benefit a return-to-work candidate.
2. The Voc Rehab Provider will identify a Work Experience location. Before starting a Work Experience for a Workers' Comp. claimant, the Voc Rehab Provider will obtain approval from the Case Manager from the Department of origin and the Department where they will be doing the work experience.
3. The Department Case Manager, where the Work Experience is to take place, will designate the on-site supervisor.
4. The Voc Rehab Provider will contact the on-site supervisor and set a time to meet with the supervisor and the return-to-work candidate. The Voc Rehab Provider will ensure that the job meets the return-to-work candidate's medical restrictions and that the work site is accessible/adaptable to the employee.
5. The Voc Rehab Provider will write an Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) or amend a current plan and have all appropriate parties sign. The IWRP will clearly outline the expectations, goals and objectives of the Work Experience. Copies of the IWRP will be provided to CMI, the return-to-work candidate, and the Department Case Manager prior to the commencement of the Work Experience.
6. The Voc Rehab Provider will fill out the Work Experience Agreement with the on site supervisor and the return-to-work candidate. Copies of the Work Experience Agreement will be provided to CMI, the return-to-work candidate, the on-site supervisor and the Department Case Manager.
7. A referral will be made by the CMI claims adjuster if a Workers' Comp claimant to one of the designated "Employer of Record" agencies. The "Employer of Record" will provide all necessary employment forms to the Voc Rehab Provider.
8. The Voc Rehab Provider will make sure all the appropriate employment forms are filled out by the return-to-work candidate and returned to the "Employer of Record" with copies to the CMI and the return-to-work candidate.

9. The Voc Rehab Provider will provide the on-site supervisor with the supervisor evaluation forms. The Voc Rehab Provider will also be responsible for collecting and reviewing the completed forms weekly and sending copies to the CMI and Department Case Manager if requested.
10. The Voc Rehab Provider will respond immediately to any request for a meeting by either the on-site supervisor or the return-to-work candidate.
11. While the return-to-work candidate is working at the Work Experience the Voc Rehab Provider will make regular follow up contacts with the on-site supervisor and the return-to-work candidate to ensure the placement is working out and that the goals and objectives are being met.
12. The return-to-work candidate will submit weekly payment vouchers reflecting appropriate wages earned and hours worked to the CMI claims adjuster. The adjuster will then compute partial weekly benefit payments.
13. In the event of a request to terminate the Work Experience (this is an "at will" agreement and may be terminated by either party without cause) the Voc Rehab Provider will inform CMI, the return-to-work candidate/on-site supervisor and the Department Case Managers.
14. Upon completion of the Work Experience, the Voc Rehab Provider will request, from the on-site supervisor, a performance evaluation and/or letter of recommendation.

For more information please contact the Office of the State Employer/Employee Health management Division at (517) 241-9090.

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